

Bill Requires Use of Best Drilling Technologies Hall Pushed For

Washington, DC - Congressman John Hall (NY-19) applauded the passage this afternoon in the House of Representatives of a crucial energy reform bill that he supported and helped shape to address concerns arising out of the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico—the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources (CLEAR) Act (H.R. 3534).

The new legislation would hold BP and responsible parties accountable for their disaster in the Gulf, as well as prevent future oil spills and protect our coastal communities and water. The CLEAR Act will create new safety measures, make sure the oil companies—and not taxpayers—fully pay for the cleanup costs of the BP spill while strengthening oversight of oil drilling.

“Working families in America should not be stuck paying to clean up oil spills caused by corporate greed,” said Rep. Hall. “This new bill is a big step toward protecting our environment and livelihoods. As we launch our clean energy economy, it’s more important than ever to hold oil companies to the highest standards of safety and environmental stewardship possible.”

Earlier in the week, Rep. Hall introduced the Safe Drill Act of 2010 (H.R. 5868), which would require oil companies to use the best available technology, such as acoustic sensors, for drilling and have an oil spill recovery plan in place before being allowed to drill—ideas that were folded into the CLEAR Act.

Targeted to effective prevention and response to oil spills and protection of our coastal communities and waters, the CLEAR Act requires strong new safety standards for offshore drilling, including independent certifications of critical equipment, demonstrations of the ability to respond to future blowouts or major spills and increased inspections, and stiffer penalties for safety violations. The bill also ends the practice of issuing environmental waivers for drilling plans and requires all vessels and rigs off U.S. coasts - even foreign owned ones - to fully adhere to U.S. safety standards.

Additionally, the new bill holds Big Oil accountable by removing the \$75 million cap on

economic damages to be paid to families and small businesses harmed by oil spills.

“We can no longer allow oil companies to dictate how they will operate in a natural environment that belongs to all Americans,” said Rep. Hall. “The fragile ecosystems of our Gulf communities, now mucked with oil, make it clear that some corporations are more concerned about their bottom line than they are about doing their business safely and avoiding harmful events. This new bill will hold BP accountable for a tragic disaster that could have been avoided.”

Congressman Hall has been an outspoken leader on the environment and the Deepwater Horizon spill. In May, 2010, Rep. Hall questioned President of BP America, Lamar McKay at a hearing in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Rep. Hall pressed McKay to admit BP was partially responsible. Before joining Congress in 2006, Rep. Hall spent over 30 years as an active environmentalist routinely expressing his commitment to renewable energy, conservation and environmental protection.